



## UNAC Connection - November 2021

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## UNITED ACADEMICS WINS THE FIRST OF FIVE ARBITRATIONS

UNAC has won its first of five current arbitrations against the university administration for the wrongful termination of a member. The arbitrator exonerated the member, ruled that the member would resume their position immediately and determined that the member would be made whole by receiving back pay and benefits.

UNAC has also settled a grievance that was headed to arbitration for non-retention of a tenured member due to program elimination. The termination notice has been rescinded and the member will be able to retire as they had originally planned. We thank the university administration for resolving this grievance through mutual agreement.

UNAC continues to vigorously defend our members in the remaining arbitrations and grievances. We will seek settlements where reasonable for our members and fight to the end where necessary. UNAC is only able to fight these cases because of our full dues paying members who give us the financial wherewithal to enforce our collective bargaining agreement (CBA), and so we thank those bargaining unit members who are dues payers.

## NEGOTIATIONS OVERVIEW



### Upcoming Bargaining Sessions (9am-5pm):

- November 29-30
- December 6-7
- January 18-19
- January 24-25
- February 7-8

*\*We'll email the Zoom links each morning*

THANK YOU to the 100+ members who have logged on to watch negotiations since we began in August. Your presence there makes a difference! If you haven't logged on to watch yet, please join us when you can. We send the Zoom link each morning of negotiations, and since we go on breaks throughout each session, we are attempting to keep our website, [www.unitedacademics.net](http://www.unitedacademics.net), updated with the current status when in session. We are also keeping our website updated with our presentations, UNAC article proposals, and UNAC counter-proposals, and we welcome your feedback on them.

Make sure you're reading our Negotiation Update emails to stay caught up with what's happening during each two-day bargaining session. The most recent update was sent on November 18, 2021.

This negotiation process could drag on for months; we need you all to stay engaged. Show both negotiation teams that you care about your future working conditions. The next section offers some ideas for how to show your engagement.

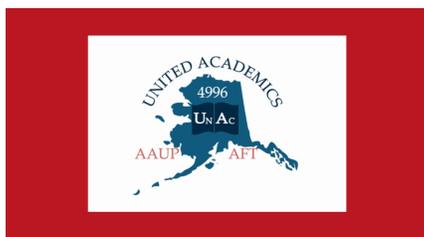
## MEMBER ACTIONS

**THANK YOU** to the UA Faculty Alliance for [their letter](#), and **THANK YOU** to the UAA Consortium Library faculty for [their letter](#), both requesting that UA administrators commit to the importance of tenure and academic freedom.

**Write your own letter**, alone or with colleagues, to the [BOR](#) and [Interim-President Pitney](#) to let them know you support the priorities of United Academics' negotiation team.

**Start a petition** in support of one of our ongoing issues.

**Use the UNAC logo below for your Zoom profile picture** during meetings and when attending negotiations:



### To make the UNAC logo your Zoom profile picture:

1. Click on the image to the left and download it to your computer
2. Go to your Zoom account settings and locate your profile
3. Click on your current profile picture to change it
4. Upload the UNAC logo and click save
5. Log on to your next Zoom meeting

*\*Logo will show when your video is turned off.*

# INCLUSION OF A LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IN THE CBA

Last year, an ad-hoc group of faculty members from across the state formed the CBA Think-Tank to brainstorm proposals for UNAC's negotiation team to consider. One such item was the inclusion of a land acknowledgement in the first article of our CBA. We listened and added that language to our Article 1 proposal.

Unfortunately, despite powerful testimony from the tri-chairs of the Alaska Native Studies Council (excerpts below) about the importance of this item, the University's negotiation team has refused to consider adding a land acknowledgement to the CBA.

We encourage all of our members to reach out to the [Board of Regents](#) and [Interim-President Pitney](#) to tell them their team should reconsider their refusal to include a land acknowledgement in Article 1 of the CBA.

## TESTIMONY ON LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

### **Dr. Maria Williams UAA - Professor of Alaska Native Studies Program and Department of Music**

*"We support this statement in Article 1. It was vetted by our members last year. It is also extremely reflective of what's happening at the three Universities. The home page at UAA has a land acknowledgement. It has videos of faculty speaking in native languages. Most meetings start with a land acknowledgement now. We also have curriculum embedded which was approved by faculty. This statement is reflective of where we're at now. I was very appreciative when I saw this added to Article 1."*

### **Dr. Sean Asiqluq Topkok UAF - Associate Professor, Center for Cross-Cultural Studies and Indigenous Studies Graduate Programs**

*"As an AK Native scholar, I acknowledge I am on ancestral lands of Lower Tanana People who continue to steward the land. Chancellor White starts every meeting with the acknowledgement - large and small meetings. Always he acknowledges the lands on which we live and work. He does that in a respectful way in Gwich'in and throughout the meeting...It's something that's being done internationally, recognizing the First Peoples that were there and are still here, acknowledging they are still stewarding these lands which we live and work on."*

*I (was) also involved in reviewing the CBA draft, and am also happy to see it as the first article. I have my own land acknowledgment and I include that in all my syllabi. I include it in all the conferences I go to, my peer review journal articles... I advocate for the verbiage in the UNAC contract, I applaud them for that and also for being a strong ally to help continue to acknowledge that we are still here, that we are federally recognized, that we continue to steward these lands."*

### **Dr. X'unei Lance Twitchell, UAS-Associate Professor of Alaska Native Languages**

*"A lot of native students come to me to say "I have to be myself, or succeed here. I can't do both." Adding land acknowledgements into the foundational University documents is wonderful. It does not privilege anyone over anyone else. If you think it's political and inappropriate, you may be making an anti-Indigenous statement"*

*yourself. It's an awkward position... They have land acknowledgments in other places. It's about anti-racism. It's a part of our university structure. It's our job to get (racist behavior) out of here in systemic and logical ways--there is no place for anti-indigenous racism at UA, and this (land acknowledgement) fully supports Alaska Native students. We can start to get there. Starting comes from not drawing a hard line in the sand over things like this."*

## BURDENS FACED BY OUR NON-TENURE TRACK MEMBERS

- Commonly given one year contracts, even when bringing in multi-year grants
- Must constantly be on the lookout for other jobs
- Loss of opportunity to contribute fully to campus and student life
- Many have worked on temporary contracts at UA for 10+ years with only a 9 month annual commitment from the university
- Often paid less than tenured and tenure-track faculty members doing the same work
- Seldom considered for leadership positions

We are attempting to minimize some of these burdens through CBA proposals for multi-year contracts, longer notice period for non-retention, and higher minimum starting salaries. If you feel strongly about improving job security for non-tenure track members, make your voice(s) heard by writing to [Interim-President Pitney](#) and the [Board of Regents](#).

## TYPICAL ANTI-UNION TACTICS FROM UA ADMINISTRATION

Interim-President Pitney's November 18 "News concerning UA's FY23 budget" message is a typical tactic used by administrations in workplaces with both represented and non-represented employees. She's offering a 2% raise for non-represented employees while also refusing to complete the final two years of the market adjustments begun in 2019.

Don't be fooled into thinking it would be simpler to know you're getting a 2% raise this year instead of waiting for negotiations to finish. This is a tactic. *UNAC proposed annual 3% raises and completion of the market adjustment study*, and we're waiting for the university's team to respond. Further, our CBA includes workplace protections in addition to just financial benefits, and we're bargaining to make those stronger too (see examples above).

## FACULTY SPOTLIGHTS

**Dr. Shannon Atkinson DeMaster, Professor at UAF College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences**

Reaction to Negotiations:

*"I am super impressed with the union, not just from my own need for support, but also I have logged into the negotiations a couple of times. On that front, my*

conclusion about the union team is that "you rock!"

## **Dr. Wei Hsiao, professor at UAA School of Education**

### **Thankful for UNAC's Assistance:**

*"I was happy when I remembered to file the FTO Cash-In request on May 3<sup>d</sup>, 2021. On the same day, I also submitted my timesheet for taking a day off on the 4<sup>th</sup> to meet the criteria of using 40 hours of FTO. Unfortunately, the process caused my application for FTO to get denied. I contacted Nelta for this issue, then Nelta helped me to contact Melanie and Abel. After several meetings in the summer, they helped me to file an MOA and successfully secured my FTO cash out. Thank you all for your hard work. I am so thankful for UNAC."*

We want to hear from you, too! Email our assistant contract manager, [Kate Quick](#), to share a story of how the union has helped you. We'd also like to hear and share stories of your achievements in future newsletters, so pass those along to Kate Quick, too.

## **REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY RECOMMITTS TO EXCELLENCE**

At their October 30, 2021 meeting, the United Academics Representative Assembly re-approved [this commitment to excellence](#), which is guided by four tenets: Honor our Differences, Prioritize the Academic Mission, Educate for the Common Good, Build the Future. These tenets are the basis for our negotiation proposals and all union activities.

## **PUBLIC SERVICE STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS**

If you have student loan debt, have made regular payments, and have worked full time for ten years anywhere in the University of Alaska system or at other public institutions, you should qualify for loan forgiveness under the newly revamped Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program. Our national affiliate American Federation of Teachers (AFT) is largely responsible for this new opportunity for PSLF through settlement in a lawsuit against former Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos. AFT has partnered with a non-profit organization, [Summer](#), to help our members apply for and receive PSLF. Go to [this website](#) for more information.

## **FTO AND TEACHING MODALITY REMINDERS**

- **Claim FTO** on your timesheet on December 27, 28, 29 (during hard closure) in order to be eligible to cash-in five days of FTO. [Visit this site](#) for more information on FTO, including the FTO cash-in form.
- **Request modality changes** to your course modality for the spring 2022 semester as soon as possible if you are uncomfortable with your current situation. Contact United Academics if your concerns aren't addressed (contact info below).

## MEETING REMINDERS

### **UNAC General Membership Meetings**

Next meeting: Tuesday, December 7, 2021, 5:30-7:00 p.m. AKT (watch for a separate email with Zoom link and agenda)

- *General Membership meetings will be held the first Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7:00 via Zoom.*
- *After this semester, we will hold meetings the 1st Tuesday and 2nd Wednesday of each month.*
- *The Executive Board has decided to open these meetings to all members rather than only dues paying members.*
- *A separate email with meeting information will be sent to all members.*

### **Next UNAC Representative Assembly Meeting**

February 19 (Sat) 10:00am 2:00pm AKT via Zoom

### **UNAC Executive Board Meetings**

Second and Fourth Wednesdays of each month, 9:30-11:30

*Dues paying members are welcome to observe the RA and Executive Board meetings. Contact the union office for the Zoom link.*

## Executive Board and Staff Contact

**President - Abel Bult-ito, Ph.D.**

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**Secretary - Charla Brown, Ph.D.**

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**UAA Organizational VP - Tara Palmer**

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**UAS Organizational VP - Lisa Hoferkamp, Ph.D.**

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**UAF Organizational VP - Mara Bacsujlaky**

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**Extended Sites Organizational VP - RickMcDonald**

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**Contract Manager - Melanie Arthur, Ph.D.**

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**Assistant Contract Manager - Kate Quick**

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**United Academics Local #4996 (UNAC)** is the bargaining unit that represents all full-time faculty at the University of Alaska. UNAC is an affiliate of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Visit [www.unitedacademics.net](http://www.unitedacademics.net)

**Happy Thanksgiving, and**

# Happy Native American Heritage Day

United Academics AAUP/AFT | P.O. Box 755895, Fairbanks, AK 99775-5895

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